1: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1940
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

PLATE I

301

Youth (Eastern Gaajok) fastening giraffe-hair necklace on friend

[Face p. 8]

1: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1940
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

PLATE II

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Girl in kraal (Eastern Gaajok)

[Face p. 16]

1: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1940
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

the reeds, where their only escape was by swimming the river. In this district, and perhaps elsewhere, Nuer, spurred by hunger, leave camp after the first heavy showers to look for giraffe tracks and pursue these animals relentlessly till they overtake them. This is only possible at the time of the first rains when the animals still have to approach camps to drink while their large hooves stick in the moist earth and slow down their movements. The Nuer, particularly those of the Zeraf river, have a reputation for their courage and skill in hunting elephants, which are surrounded and speared by large parties.

Nuer hunting has thus the same character of simplicity as their fishing. They use little cunning and, except for the spiked-wheel trap, no mechanical devices. This trap is used by immigrant Dinka in most parts of Nuerland and by some of the Lou Nuer, who, nevertheless, regard it as a Dinka contrivance and accordingly tend to despise it, regarding its use as unworthy of men possessing cattle but allowable to poor persons who can thereby obtain meat and even cattle, for giraffe-hair is highly valued for necklaces, such as those which can be seen on Nuer in many plates (especially Plates I and XXVIII(*b*)). Hence one finds a few members of a camp setting traps while the rest abstain. They are set around drinking-pools at the end of the dry season or in the early rains when surface water is still restricted and the ground is not yet moist enough to rot the leather nooses. In 1930 on the Sobat large numbers of giraffe were captured by means of spiked-wheel traps, but it appears to have been an exceptional year. If game-pits are dug at all by Nuer they are very rare and found only on the borders of Dinka tribes, and the burning of stretches of grass that have survived the annual firing in order to spear or club the animals that flee the flames is a very casual practice. In the dry season in Western Nuerland, and probably in other parts, though not on the Sobat, men harpoon hippopotami along the tracks to their nightly grazing grounds. Hippopotamus hunting is not, however, considered a Nuer practice, but a habit of Shilluk and some of the Dinka tribes; and even in those parts where Nuer hunt them it is said to be only men with a few cattle who do so. We may conclude that hunting does not give Nuer much meat and that they do not greatly esteem it as a sport.

1: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1940
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

135 Nuerland lacks the two raw materials that have played so important a part in the manufacture of primitive tools: iron and stone. Nuer have always been poor in iron objects. Till recently 411 they possessed very few iron spears, cherished as heirlooms, but used instead the straightened horns of antelope and buck, ebony wood, and the rib-bones of giraffe, all of which are still used to-day, 442 though almost entirely in dances (Fig. 11). Wooden hoes were used for gardening, and are still sometimes so used to-day. Iron ●301 bells (Fig. 4) are rare and highly prized even at the present time, and in the old days iron rings and bracelets were important pieces of property. Wooden bells and ivory and leather rings and bracelets took their place in common use. Nuer have no knowledge of 325 smelting and little of the blacksmith's art. I have never seen a forge and, though there are certainly some blacksmiths, their art is crude and may be regarded as a recent innovation, at any rate in most parts of Nuerland. Spears bought from Arab merchants are beaten out in the cold.

135 Nuerland also lacks any kind of hard stone. Indeed, outside villages I have never seen a stone. They are sometimes brought 412 from neighbouring areas and employed as hammers, for smoothing 323 metal ornaments, for rubbing skins, and so on. Grinding grain seems to have been a recent introduction. The grinder is made from thornwood and the grindstone from baked marsh mud mixed with finely pounded potsherds (Fig. 12). With clay, mud, and sand, Nuer also make pots, grain-bins, pipes, toys, hearthstones, and firescreens; construct the walls of byres and huts; and coat floors and those parts of homesteads they wish to keep smooth and clean.

137 Nature, which denies them iron and stone, is niggardly in her gift of wood. Large trees are rare. Thornwood and low brush- 322 wood provide timber for building, spear-shafts, harpoon-shafts, clubs (Frontispiece and Plate VIII), pestles, neck-rests, baskets, and winnowing trays. Probably no trees in Nuerland are suitable for carving and Nuer possess no wooden utensils. Even the ebony they use for making spears is not found in their country. Ambatch-trees grow in some parts of the swamp areas and from it is made an object which serves as a parrying stick, tobacco pouch, pillow, and seat (Plate XXIX). Byre and kraal fires are fed with [372] dried dung, and wood fuel is only employed in the kitchen—grasses and millet stalks sometimes being used as a substitute. Grasses, millet stalks, and some plants are also used for various purposes: rafters, windscreens, thatching, cord, basketwork, &c. Gourds are cultivated for dairy utensils.

237 Lacking iron and stone Nuer thus make use of vegetable and earthy materials instead. Animal products are also a valuable

1: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1940
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

PLATE XXVIII

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a. Youth (Zeraf river)

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b. Youth (Lou)

c. Man (Zeraf river)

[Face p. 256]

2:Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1951
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

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11. A maiden, smoking pipe

[facing p. 40]

2:Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1951
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

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/ iv. Sweethearts

[Facing page 68]

2;Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1951
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

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VI. A married woman, wearing skirt
In the background a man plays on a harp

[Facing p. 112]

2:Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1951
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

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VII. A youth singing in praise of his ox. His arms are raised in imitation of its horns

[Facing page 128]

8:Howell E, G-5 (1942-1944)1954
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

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Photo: Dr. J. F. Blous

THE CHIEF. KIC WUR WINYANG OF THE LAK NUER

[facing p. 80]

8:Howell E, G-5 (1942-1944)1954
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

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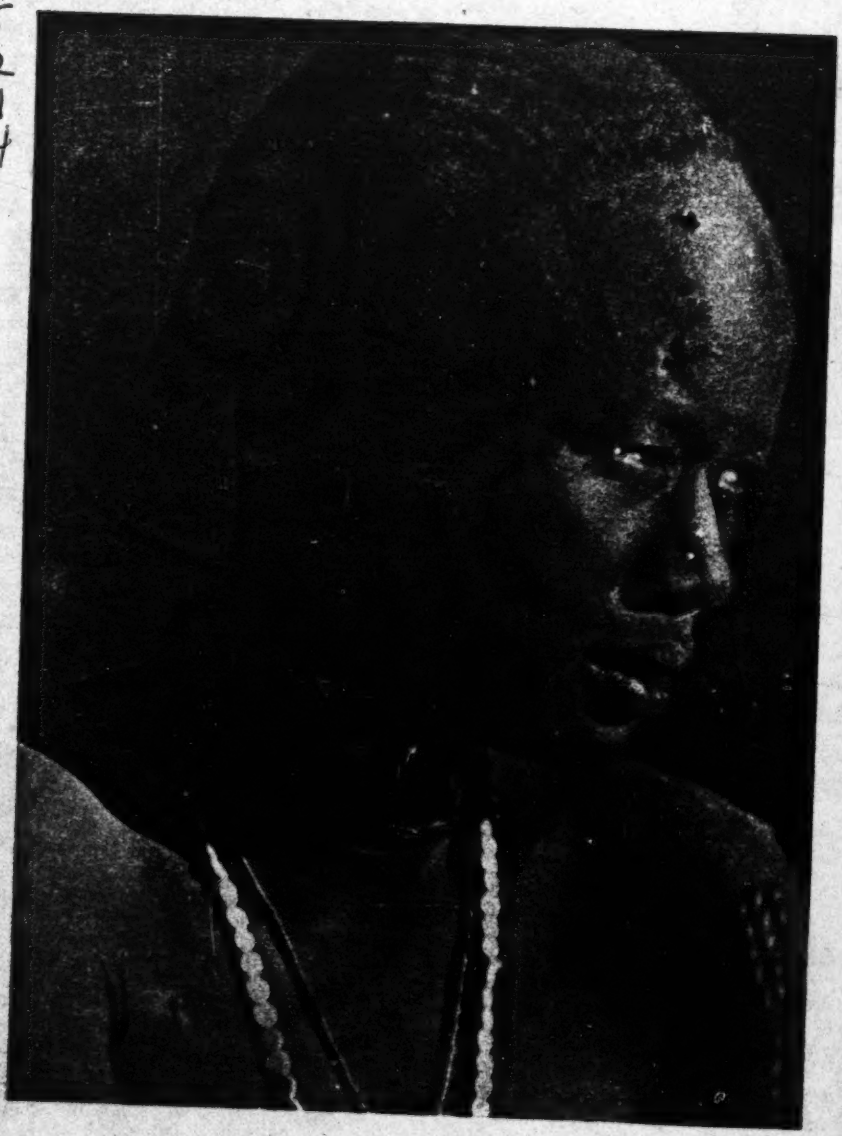

THE BRIDE

[facing p. 81]

8:Howell E, G-5 (1942-1944)1954
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

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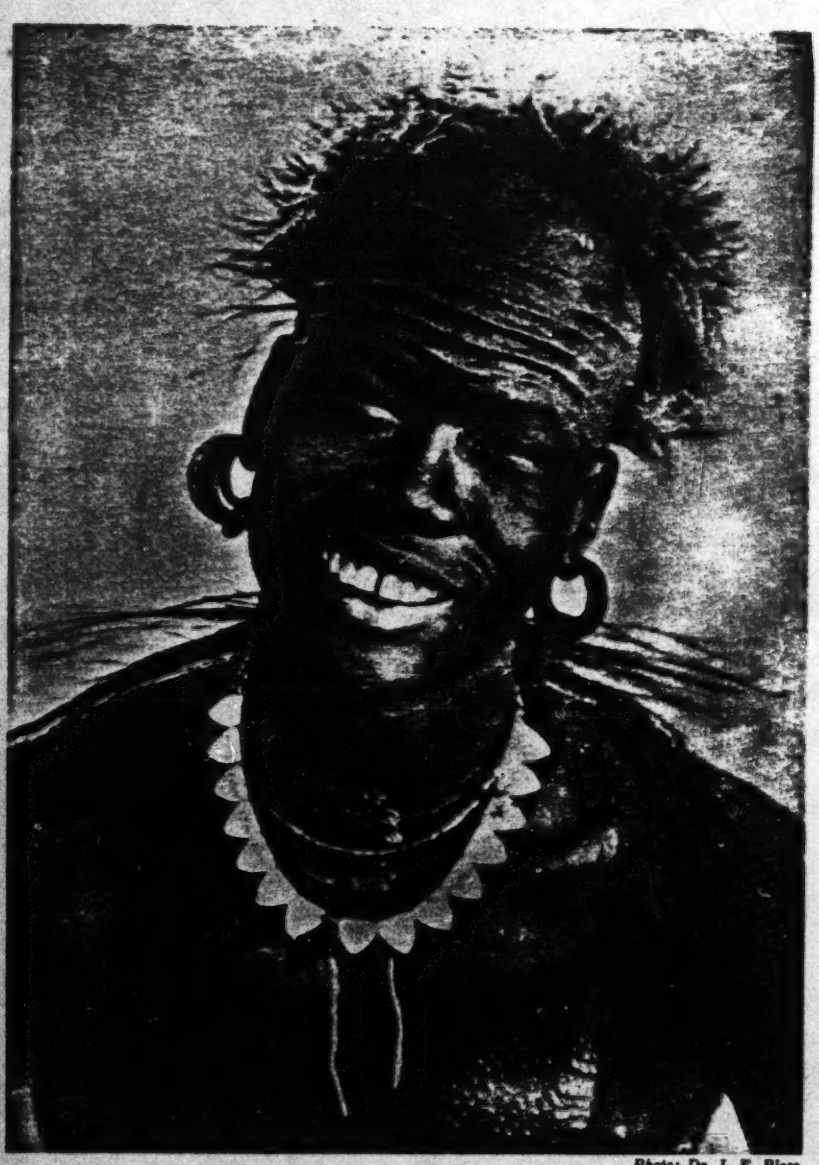

Photo: Dr. J. F. Bloss

THE BRIDEGROOM

[facing p. 160]

8:Howell E, G-5 (1942-1944)1954
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

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BUTH DIU

[facing p. 177]

8:Howell E, G-5 (1942-1944)1954
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

farther afield may be abandoned for the time being. Other people whose opportunities for fishing may not be so great as their neighbours' may utilize the less accessible pools unmolested, but should climatic conditions cause scarcity elsewhere their owners will demand the right to use them to the exclusion of other people.

Hunting rights are also defined by the limits of recognized tribal or segment territory, but since the Nuer are not very active hunters there is no clear definition, and quarrels rarely arise. There are rules governing the division of the flesh of wild animals killed in collective hunting, though they are rarely followed without argument. The division of meat in these circumstances often leads to violent quarrels but is not a subject which reaches the stage of litigation in the courts. Ivory, a very valuable commodity in Nuer eyes, not because of its market value but because it is the ambition of most Nuer to own an ivory bracelet, is subject to more definite rules. The right tusk must always go to the first spearer, the *ran me koic e-je*, the left tusk to the second spearer, the *ran me gam e-je*. Others who take part in the hunt, even if the wounds they have inflicted have been much more deadly than those of the first two spearers, get no more than their share of the meat. Those who get the tusks must divide them among their kinsmen according to principles similar to those which govern the distribution of bridewealth cattle. The central portion must be given to the *gwan buthni* of the lineage, this portion being sufficient to make one large bangle; of the remainder a portion must go *kwi gwan*, to the father's side, and a portion *kwi man* (or *nar*), to the mother's or maternal uncle's side. Dead elephants are sometimes found, the ivory going to the first and second finder in the same manner. The right to tusks and the way in which they are distributed are not matters which come before the courts, and there are strong ritual sanctions for observing the correct rules. There is a mystical link between man—that is, Nuer—and elephants, which means that killing them is not only a hazardous physical undertaking, but is also spiritually dangerous. It is something akin to homicide, and special ritual must be performed, including the letting of blood (*birr*) from the first spearer.[1] Nuer also believe that if they ignored the rules of distribution, the spirit (*cien*) of the dead elephant would haunt them and would bring them misfortunes.

Conclusion

Rights in land are therefore collective and follow the segmentary structure of Nuer society. They are recognized and nowadays will be enforced in the courts, and they embrace all types of land necessary to the subsistence economy of the Nuer, but they are not in constant

[1] As in homicide it is the first spearer who is held responsible for the animal's death.

cow manure until he is a greyish-white. He keeps his hair 302
either cut short or shaved off entirely (possibly a tuft may be left on the top of the head), or he lets it grow long and bleaches it by frequent applications of cow-manure ashes applied wet. While the bleaching process goes on he may dress his hair in various styles with a point at the back or at the front or at both places. When the hair is bleached to a light bronze shade he dusts the ashes out of it and is quite proud of the effect. Long black hair is worn only by medicine men. The Nuer man may continue to adorn his body with ornaments and ashes and will especially do so if he is planning another marriage.

The Nuer usually have clean teeth. They clean them 515
with cow-manure ashes, using a twig the end of which has been chewed into the semblance of a small brush.

Nuer men, possibly because they use ashes so constantly on their bodies, and probably because they do not usually wear clothing, seldom have lice. But the strands of beads [301]
worn by women and girls are often infested with them.

The Nuer age early, and both men and women look 145
older than they really are. One would guess some of the older men one meets at between 65 and 70. The Nuer woman usually keeps her erect carriage, but in middle life her flabby breasts, broken teeth, or vacant places where teeth have been pulled out tend to increase the appearance of age.

Clothing is not considered essential by the Nuer man 291
and is not usually worn. He may wear a bright coloured cloth—resembling a red plaid tablecloth, only somewhat more brilliant, he may be satisfied with a piece of the cheap blue cloth that is sold by the Arab merchant, his cloth may be of unbleached muslin, or possibly the District Commissioner has honoured him by giving him a cloth or (if he is a chief) one of the gowns they usually give the

14: Huffman M-5 (no date) 1931
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

291 chiefs. If he does wear a cloth, he wears it under one arm and knotted over the opposite shoulder. The Nuer appropriates any old cast-off clothing he may find. Sometimes grotesque effects are produced when he appears attired in his new wardrobe.

576 A man must never appear before his mother-in-law unless he is wearing some kind of a loin-cloth. It may be of skin (Fig. 1) or cloth, but he must have at least a one-piece suit on besides his beads.

291 A woman after marriage must always wear a loin-cloth of some description. And as she grows older, she usually wears a cloth or sheepskin over the upper part of her body, under one arm and fastened over the opposite shoulder.

The married woman's garb (Figs. 2 and 5) consists of a triangular piece of sheepskin worn over the pubic region, with a larger triangular piece of sheepskin at the back, the two pieces meeting at the waistline at each side but not overlapping to any extent. The lower point of each is longer and narrower than the upper points, terminating in a narrow strip about one or two inches wide. The piece that is worn in front usually has a border of beads sewed on it and may have a small bell hung on the end.

Sometimes a number of little thin strips of sheepskin about eight to ten inches long are fastened together and then worn in front in place of the triangular piece of sheepskin that is usually worn there.

The back part of this garb has a border of beads (from one and one-half to two inches wide) at the waist but not on the sides, unless the woman is quite old, and then she may if she wishes have a border of beads on the sides also.

• [301] Bells, charms, shells, pendants of any kind, short pieces of cowtails, may be fastened at the waistline on the back part of the married woman's dress.

482 A Nuer girl, when quite young, begins to carry burdens such as water-jars on her head.

14: Huffman M-5 (no date) 1931
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

such as water-jars on her head. This accounts to some extent for the straight, erect bearing of the women and girls. She may have a number of iron anklets—possibly from one to six—on each ankle, the weight of which causes her to throw her feet outward when walking so that the anklets of one leg do not hit the other leg, but her general posture is graceful.

Grass skirts are made by taking the outer bark of a certain tall grass and tearing it into long thin strips. These are then rolled tightly and made into grass skirts by a method of weaving and binding at one side, leaving the other ends loose. Grass skirts are made in two sizes, one—the short one—being from six to ten inches long. The short grass skirt may also be worn as a garment by a married woman, for every married woman must wear a loin-cloth of some description. The long grass skirt reaches from hip to ankle, and is worn as a dance dress. It is made in the same manner as the short skirt, but the longer grass is used for its construction.

The short grass skirt (Fig. 4) is usually worn over the long grass skirt at dances. Sometimes a bead is fastened on the end of each strand of grass in the short grass skirt. Both long and short grass skirts are oiled until they are soft and pliable and a dark brown in appearance. When worn at a dance, short bushy stubs of cowtails are worn around the waist at the back over the grass skirts.

The Nuer girl may or may not wear a cloth, just as it suits her. If she does wear one, it is worn under one arm and knotted over the opposite shoulder. Those living near the Arab settlements may dress somewhat as the Arab women do, or they may wear the dresses the Arab merchants make for sale to them. But no matter how many garments she may possess, the Nuer girl—if unmarried—may discard any or all of them at will.

14: Huuman M-5 (no date) 1931
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

ORNAMENTS

301 The Nuer man wears necklaces of many strands of giraffe hair (Fig. 3) which are strung through a large bead. He has a method of knotting the loose ends which is clever and neat and at the same time very firm. Indeed, so firm is it that if one person can get hold of another by this necklace, he may lead him wherever he wants him to go as there is no danger of the knot giving way. Sometimes after the hairs have been made into a firm knot the ends may be left and ornamented by having many bright coloured beads strung on them. A man may wear several of these necklaces with various pendants hung on them (especially if he is unmarried or is thinking of acquiring a second or third wife).

A strand of beads, with probably fifteen to twenty of one colour, then the same number of another colour alternately, may be worn over one shoulder and under the opposite arm, while a similar strand is worn on the other side, the strands crossing at the centre, front and back, and the coloured beads glistening against the dark skin. Strands of beads, a number of one colour alternating with the same number of some contrasting colour, are worn around the waist.

An ivory armlet may be worn just above the elbow, a smaller one may be worn on the other arm just above the elbow, and a third (a small one) on the upper arm several inches above the large ivory armlet, usually on the left arm. But when three ivory armlets are worn it is a sure indication that the man is to be married in the immediate future.

Wristlets made either of brass or wire, pounded into various shapes, are worn. The wristlet may be made of a wire which has been beaten flat and thin, it may have several sharp prongs or possibly it may be made of wire with two sharp prongs several inches in length.

14: Huffman M-5 (no date) 1931
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

From forty to fifty brass wire armlets of graduated sizes may be worn on the forearm (Fig. 3). They cover the arm from wrist to elbow. This ornament is usually worn on the left arm. The brass wire is heavy, and when first put on causes the hand to swell and often a sore forms on the arm under the bracelets. The man must hold the arm high in order to relieve it of the pain and weight caused by this ornament. But he wears a ring of brass on the right thumb and frequently rubs the ring up and down the bracelets, enjoying the sound made thereby and causing others to notice his ornament.

In case a sore forms under the bracelets, a certain leaf is put in over it. The man is proud of his ornament, and will endure a good deal of suffering in order to wear it. But that arm is incapacitated for work in many cases until the bracelets are removed.

Boys who have not as yet had the tribal marks cut do not wear the brass bracelets.

A man whose wife expects to be a mother may wear a wristlet of either white and black or red and black or possibly red and white beads alternating one by one. This supposedly keeps him from sores and scratches caused by grass.

A few large wooden beads strung on wire and worn either as anklet or wristlet will keep any one from scratches from grass according to the firm belief of the Nuer.

An armlet which is worn just above the elbow may be made out of the hipbone of a cow. It is cut in a circular shape and a hole is made in the centre while the outer edge is notched.

Small beads made out of ostrich eggshell, cut round with a hole in the centre of each, are strung together, and may be worn as a wristlet, or a strand of them may be wound about the waist or neck.

301 A strand of beads, one black, one white, or one red, one white alternating, with a larger bead in the centre may be worn as a headband, the larger bead being worn in the centre of the forehead. A headband consisting of a number of round blue disks may also be worn (these are, however, bought from the Arab merchants).

Numerous finger and thumb rings are worn. A wire wrapped around the finger several times, or a ring with one or two long prongs may be stylish.

Styles—even in beads—change. At one time bead girdles were worn by the Nuer men, consisting of as many as one hundred and fifty strands of beads, but that fashion seems to be a thing of the past since 1925.

Nuer of both sexes delight in wearing a string of aluminium hearts around the waist (Fig. 3).

An older woman usually has but few ornaments. When she is married, she gives all her ornaments to her husband's people, who, in return, give her the married woman's dress and such ornaments as they wish to give her. She usually gives many more than she receives. Sometimes the husband may from time to time give her either necklace or bracelets, but more often the decrease in ornaments starts at the time of her marriage. Later on, she may give some of her ornaments to her children or to a relative. One frequently sees the older woman wearing wooden beads, and possibly some of the beads they get from the Arab merchants, but seldom has she giraffe-hair ornaments.

302 If a woman has only one child she may cut her hair, leaving one little tuft on top of her head, and one on either side, and also one in the centre front and back of her head to indicate this.

301 The Nuer girl adorns her body with many bead necklaces, iron or brass anklets and wristlets, headbands of

14: Huffman M-5 (no date) 1931
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

beads similar to those worn by the men, strings of beads over each shoulder and under the opposite arm, and many strands around her waist. As she nears the marriageable age she has numerous strands of giraffe hair—with various pendants—about her neck. 301

She may also bleach her hair and wear brass bracelets on her arm. But she does not wear nearly as many of these brass bracelets as her brother, nor does she wear them as tightly, for no matter how much she may wish for ornaments, she must do her work of pounding the dura and must not incapacitate her arm for that work. None the less, the bracelets give many a girl a sore. [302]

Wristlets are also made of giraffe hair with beads of various colours strung on the various hairs. These are quite pretty and add a bright bit of colour to a girl's arm. She usually wears a spiked bracelet—even the small children wear them—and they are a dangerous weapon when they are angry with one another, and wish to strike.

The Nuer girl has a hole pierced in the centre of her upper lip. She may wear a blade of grass, a flower, or a small stick of wood in it, but usually she wears a nail with the point sticking outward. 301 304

The ears of a girl are pierced in from five to seven places along the outer edge. This is done with a sharp-pointed native needle, and then little sticks or straws are worn in the holes in order to keep them open. The ears are frequently very sore and sometimes quite painful and slow in healing after this operation. The ears are usually pierced before the girl is in her teens, part of the holes being pierced at one time, the remainder when the first sores caused by the piercing are well. She often wears bead or grass ornaments in them. But the object of this is that the ears may be ready for the white beads which will be put in them when the girl is married. If

14: Huffman M-5 (no date) 1931
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

301 she has not already had her ears pierced, her husband
304 or his people may pierce all the places in both ears at once and put in the white beads that are the insignia of her married state. Whether her ears are sore or not, she must wear these white beads that proclaim her married status to all who see her.

301 Bands of beads may be worn on the upper arm or just below the knee. Sometimes strings of beads several inches in length are attached as pendants.

Feathers are frequently worn in the hair and sometimes in the lowest holes that are pierced in the ears. Sometimes a quill is worn in the upper lip.

[751] A newborn baby is not very old before it is attired in bead anklets, wristlets, or a necklace with charms to keep the evil eye away from the child. A strand of beads around the waist, sometimes with a tiny bell as pendant, may be worn. As the child grows older, if a girl, anklets of wire are put on. Also any little child may be seen with wristlets of wire. Shells or beads may be tied to the hair.

302 If an only child, the hair may all be cut except five little tufts, one being at top of head, one at each side, and one at the centre back and front.

301 Wooden beads are also worn by babies. No clothing
291 is worn unless some dress has been received as a gift and donned for special occasions—especially if the donor be present. The mother covers the tiny baby with her cloth if she possesses one.

301 As the child grows older, he wears more beads, either the wooden beads or those purchased of the merchant. But he wears no giraffe hair until—if a boy—he has the six tribal marks cut. A girl when nearing the age of puberty, or even younger, may begin to wear giraffe hair.

14: Huffman M-5 (no date) 1931
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

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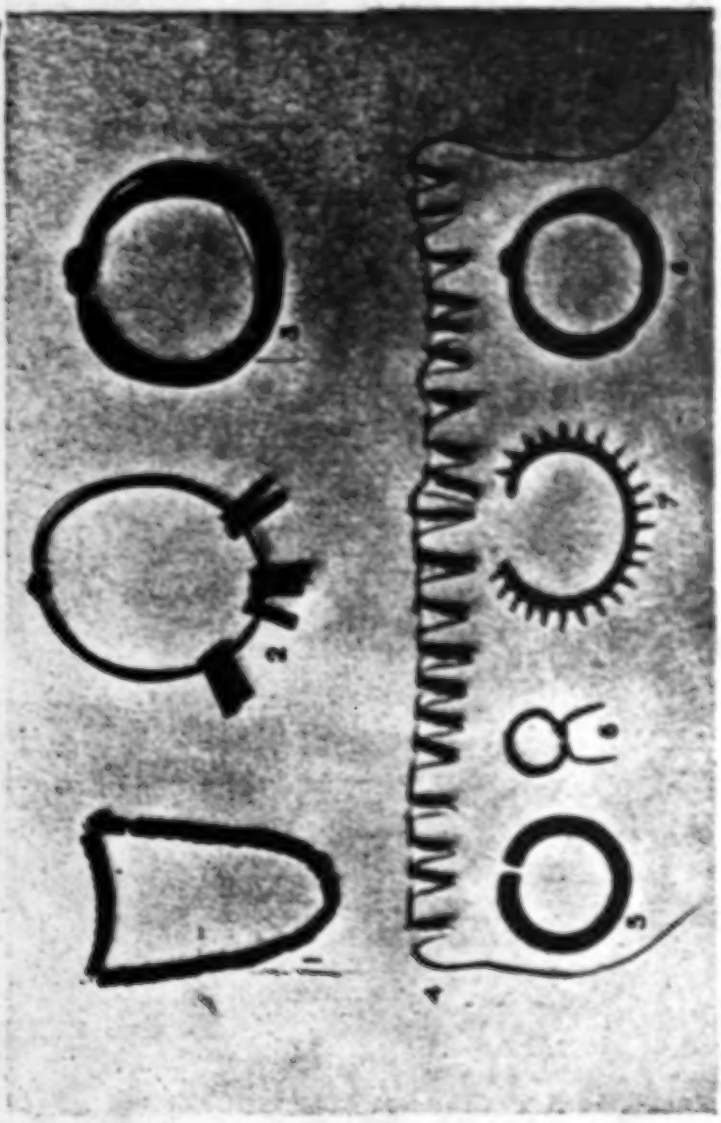

Fig. 3. ORNAMENTS

1. Necklace of wooden beads. 2. Necklace of girdle hair with wooden pendants. 3. Necklace of girdle hair (note the knot). 4. Aluminium ornaments worn around wrist. 5. Wristlet of brass wire, punched disc. 6. Two-pronged wristlet. 7. Many-pronged wristlet. 8. Wristlet of girdle hair with beads

[facing p. 17]

14: Huffman M-5 (no date) 1931
F J22 Nuer F J22

297/304 names announced before they may come near, for the evil eye must constantly be guarded against.

An animal skin is always spread on the ground for him to sit on. Food is specially prepared for him in order that he may speedily regain his strength and vigour again. He is treated as a most honoured guest in the village, and is the centre of concern.

Later on the boy is supposed to give some gift to the man who cut the tribal marks for him. Sometimes this man happens to be a very dear friend of the boy and may honour him by cutting seven cuts instead of the customary six.

The boy takes cane-stalks and peels them, cutting them into four-inch lengths. He makes a girdle or belt of them by fastening them together side by side. He may go visiting at night after his wounds are well on the way to recovery, and he always wears this belt. He also carries a long stick which has a piece of ambatch or other light wood at the end of it, and also a cluster of white feathers.

He is not allowed to go among the cattle until he is entirely well. When one asks him if his wounds are healed he will always say 'not yet', but one may find out if they are really healed by asking him if he has gone among the cattle. If not, the wounds are still sore, but if he has been with the cattle it means that the wounds are well healed, although the boy will not say so for fear some one with the evil eye should hear of it.

[303] No pregnant woman must come near the boy until his wounds are healed; a man whose wife is pregnant must also be avoided.

● 301 Nuers do not wear bead necklaces after the tribal marks are cut, although strands of beads may be worn around the waist or over each shoulder and under the opposite arm. Wooden beads may be worn for a few months, then they may wear the giraffe hair necklaces.

14: Huffman M-5 (no date) 1931
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[facing P. 33]

Fig. 5. WOMEN'S GARB

1. Back section of married woman's two-piece suit. 2. Brass wristlet (many of these of graduated sizes may be worn). 3. Iron anklet (for girls). 4. Front section of married woman's two-piece suit. 5. Small coins, as tied on wrist. 6. Front section of married woman's dress (interchangeable with 4)

Chapter Five

COURTSHIP AND MARRIAGE AND THE BABY

PREPARATION AND CHOICE

583 PROBABLY the most important event in the life of a Nuer girl is her courtship and marriage.

Her thoughts, even when a child, are upon her future husband, who he may be, what he may pay as the marriage price. Of course she often hears the village talk of how many cattle may be received for her. Sometimes her father or her brothers need cattle to help them out of financial difficulties incurred possibly through their own marriage plans. So they arrange the girl's marriage while she is yet a little girl and secure an initial payment of a cow or two in order to help them out. The husband does not take the girl to his village then but waits until she is older, and then he must pay the rest of the wedding price for her. Sometimes this man may be young, but more often he is an older man who has the cattle to help her father out of his extremity. And this older man may be planning to take her for his second or third wife, or possibly to get her for a wife for his son.

304 During her younger years she must have each ear
301 pierced in from five to seven places along the outer edge, and she must have her upper lip pierced in the centre in order to wear a nail in it. When she is first taken to her husband's home white beads, as has already been noted, must be put in her ears, which will proclaim her status as a married woman to all who see her.

857 During her girlhood she must learn all the tasks that fall to woman's lot.

301 As she nears marriageable age she adorns her body with all the beads, anklets, wristlets, necklaces of various

14: Huffman M-5 (no date) 1931
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

kinds, and rings that she can acquire. She also bleaches her hair and wears several headbands of beads. 301

Some neighbouring young man may be the cause of all of this effort on her part.

During the fishing season the lover is neither idle nor silent in his efforts to win the regard of his bride. He may be at the same fishing camp as she is; if so, he carefully grooms his best ox, then adorns his body with all possible ornaments and, getting some one to lead his ox, they circle around the camp. He dances as he follows the ox and sings praises of his ox, himself, and his sweetheart in loud tones that may be heard for some distance. This performance may be continued for some hours, especially the singing. 584

Usually the young man knows when he is not repulsive to the girl. When he has her assurance that she loves him, his people take up the subject of the marriage price with her people. The girl's physical appearance and possibility of bearing children figure largely in the estimate of her desirability. Also her temper and ability to control it are considered. [581]

A certain day is agreed on for the marriage talk. Then all the men who are interested on the bridegroom's side assemble at the village of the bride-to-be. Places have been arranged for the relatives of the bridegroom to sit on one side of an open area, facing the relatives of the bride who are seated upon the opposite side.

A stick with both ends curved in a scroll design is carried by the speaker and twirled in the hands as he walks back and forth between the two factions and presents his arguments. He also wears a loin-cloth, often the skin of a wildcat. Sometimes it happens that each speaker is not the possessor of a loin-cloth, so a quick change is made, as one speaker concludes his speech and another prepares to take his turn.

16: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1956
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

301

Youth

[frontispiece]

16: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1956
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

PLATE VII

301
411
145

Youth and boy

[facing p. 172]

16: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1956
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

PLATE XII

301
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Youth wearing *thiau* (arm-rings)

[facing p. 234]

16: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1956
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

811 confirmed to some extent by the evidence of my photographs,[1] supported these conclusions, but I asked Dr. Lienhardt and Dr. Howell to verify them, which they have been able to do. It should
[513] follow also that a husband sleeps on the right side of the hut and his wife on the left side, and here again Dr. Lienhardt has been good enough to confirm that this is the invariable practice. He has made a further and important observation. I was aware that the
[823] west is associated with death and the east with life, but I did not know, till he told me, that east is identified with right and west with left, thus bringing into the left–right polarity the polar representations not only of life and death but also of the cardinal points east and west. I am indebted to Dr. Mary Smith for the further observation that Nuer speak of 'right-handed peace' (*'mal me cuec'*). They would never speak of left-handed peace.

It is in accord with what we have learnt of the associations with
[826] left and right in Nuer thought that Nuer youths should emphasize the contrast between the two hands by putting the left arm
●301 out of action altogether for months or even a year or two. This they do by pressing a series of metal rings (*thiau*) into the flesh of the left arm from the wrist upwards so tightly that sores and great pain result and the arm is rendered useless for any purpose other than the display of fortitude and as a passive instrument for the right hand to play upon (Plate XII). A ring on a finger of the right hand is rubbed up and down the discs on the imprisoned left arm to accompany the compliments and endearments of courtship. Such a mutilation is only fully intelligible in terms of symbolic associations. Here the fact that it is only the left horn of favourite
[231] oxen which is debased (if the right is trained at all it is trained upwards) is of great significance, for, as will be seen, a man and his favourite ox are identified. What he does to his left hand he does to his ox's left horn: what he does to the ox he does to himself.

826 It is perhaps important to add that Nuer do not think of the
811 left hand as being in a material sense evil. Left-handed persons suffer no disabilities at all and are not considered in other respects as different from other people. Nuer do not, in my experience, attach any importance to the matter, but simply say of a left-

[1] All deformed horns in the photographs are left horns. Some branches in them, however, are to the left of the windscreens, but Nuer erect branches for practical purposes as well as for religious reasons, and I do not think it is possible to distinguish between them by sight.

16: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1956
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

CHAPTER XII

PRIESTS AND PROPHETS

I

It has been noted that women do not make sacrifice and that 782
though any man can make it only senior men who are fathers of families, 'bulls' as the Nuer call them, do so. Personal sacrifices are usually, as in most cases of sickness, performed by the head of the family or some senior kinsman and neighbour, but sacrifices which have more than domestic import and are thought of as involving a whole lineage or clan—collective sacrifices—have to be performed by a person called *gwan buthni*, whom I have spoken of as the master of ceremonies.

The verb *buth* means 'to share', and since collateral lineages of 613
a clan and also clans with common ancestry may claim portions 614
of the flesh of sacrificial victims at each other's collective sacrifices, 727
there is said to be *buth* between them. They are to one another 782
jibuthni, people who share. The word is also used when speaking of the adoption of a captured Dinka into his captor's lineage. He is said to be *lath buthni*, given shares. A sacrifice is made and in the invocation at it the guardian spirit of the lineage is asked to receive the Dinka into its care and the ghosts of the ancestors are informed of what is being done. The Dinka is smeared with the victim's chyme. He now counts as a member of his captor's lineage and has a right to partake of the meats of its sacrifices and also to claim a portion of the meat at sacrifices by any other lineage to which this lineage stands in a *buth* relationship. *Buth* has consequently the further meaning of agnation. *Jibuthni* are agnates. *Lath buthni* is to be given agnation. Agnates are people who share in the flesh of sacrifices.

Buth relationship is stated also in terms of the division of 613
elephant tusks or of cattle exchanged for them. When hunters 614
kill an elephant the right tusk goes to the *koc*, the man who first 224
speared it, and the left tusk to the *gam*, the man who speared it [301]
next. The tusks are cut into portions to be used as armlets—one of the most precious of Nuer possessions—or are exchanged for